



Drawing EXPLORED

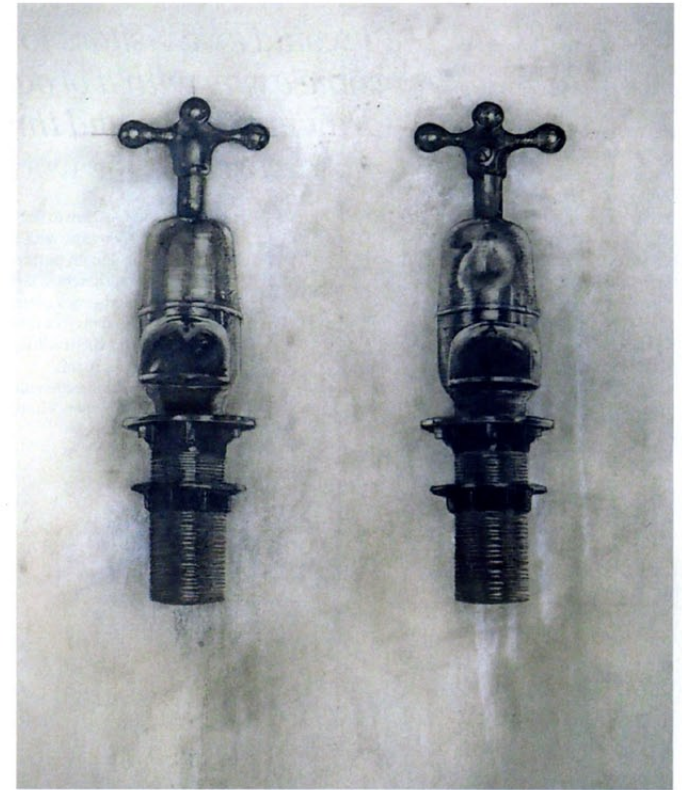
Freed from the confines of the sketchbook, an exhibition at Tremenheere Gallery is challenging ideas of what drawing may be. Mercedes Smith talks to artists involved about the new definition of drawing

This May, the Newlyn Society of Artists present an exhibition simply on the subject of drawing. I say 'simply' because although drawing - as a discipline - is inherently complex, it is rare to see an exhibition with such a pure and appealing focus. NSA Drawing Explored, on show from the 5 - 30 May at Gulval's Tremenheere Gallery, aims to demonstrate the wide range of approaches to drawing that

artists employ, and promises a thrilling collection of intimate, thought provoking work. Its appeal, to many people, will lie in our playful childhood associations with pencil and paper. That first experience of drawing, that first discovery of our creative self, is 'fundamental, the corner stone of everything' says artist and NSA member Kate Walters 'and it is the child in us which remains the artist'. For those of us who studied art into

adulthood, drawing became a central pillar of our education, the gauge by which our ability was mercilessly measured.

'Certainly, within arts education, the practice of drawing is still recognised as an important core discipline' says NSA member Dan Pyne. 'Both Falmouth University, and Arts University Bournemouth offer it as a standalone degree subject, and I believe Camberwell College of Art still does too,



TOP LEFT:
Andrew Swan
Rageover 2
(etching)

TOP RIGHT:
Michelle Ohlson
Untitled 1
(graphite on
drafting paper)

RIGHT:
Marie-Claire
Hamon *Wayward*
(oil and pencil on
paper)

but sometimes even we, as practicing artists, lose sight of how broad the practice of drawing has become. This show is an opportunity for both viewer and artist alike to reappraise how we define it.' Drawing, certainly, has advanced irrevocably in the context of 21st century art, and the strength of this exhibition is its broad interpretation of exactly what drawing is. 'An expanded definition of drawing is the fundamental ambition of this show' says NSA committee member Peter Webster. 'Drawing is now such a wide-ranging practice we thought it would be interesting,

'I would love visitors to this exhibition to come away with a broader sense of what drawing can be and through that to look more closely at the world around them.'

BELOW LEFT: Tim Ridley *Bison* (biro on paper in handmade sketchbook)

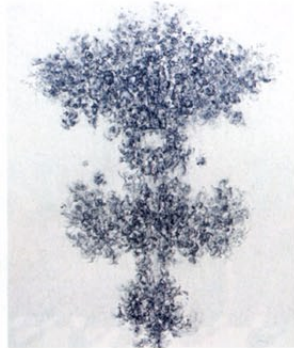
BELOW RIGHT: Jayne Anita Smith *Belfry* (graphite, charcoal and gesso on aluminium panel)

revealing and exciting to see how our artists engage with it. That might include preparatory or experimental sketches, large scale or extended series of works, and conceptual ideas in a range of media, as well as the traditional, observational approach.'

Accordingly, alongside works on paper in pencil, pen, charcoal

and paint, the exhibition will include sculpture, 3D work, video and found objects. It also includes a documentary film in which the artists talk briefly about their own approach to drawing. 'I think it is important for our members to define drawing for themselves' explains artist Daniel Turner. 'Drawing is not any one thing for me. It's a way of recording and experimenting with ideas that could take any form, from a quick assemblage, to a diagram or a sound recording, paint on a surface, note taking, or a pencil study, and so on.' Michelle Ohlson, one of two artists selected for an extended showing of work on the gallery's first floor, tells me 'drawing is central to all the work I make, whether the resulting object is what might traditionally be identified as a drawing, or as sculpture, photography or print.

Historically, exhibitions of drawing have been unusual, because it was considered a



ABOVE: Duncan Walters *Fragment* (Polychrome pencil on Carrara Marble)

LEFT: Una D'Aragona *Borderlands* (digital drawing)



private aspect of the artist's practice, but there has been a lot of interest in drawing in recent decades, with artists consciously challenging the parameters of what a drawing may be. Consequently, drawing practice is in a state of flux, and is a very exciting area of the fine arts to be involved with right now.' Dan Pyne agrees, saying 'you only have to look at the success of the Jerwood Drawing Prize and its accompanying exhibition to see the strength of interest in drawing from artists themselves. In London we even have The Drawing Room, Europe's only public gallery dedicated to contemporary drawing, and recently the international Big Draw festival [last year held across 25 countries and involving 400,000 participants]

has reached so many people, promoting visual literacy and the language of drawing as a tool for learning and self-expression.'

This exhibition then, gives voice to current debates on the meaning and potential of drawing today, and crucially, according to Michelle Ohlson, 'is inviting an exploration of definitions, rather than setting parameters.'

'We wanted to be as open as we could' says artist and NSA committee member Tim Ridley, of the final selection process, 'so any medium which describes a line, discusses the drawing out of an idea, researches the use of line or depicts drawing in its simplest form, has been considered.' Works on show in the ground floor exhibition space will be made up of selected

works by NSA members, while the upstairs space is given over to an extended collection of work by members Michelle Ohlson and Jack Davis. 'I would love visitors to this exhibition to come away with a broader sense of what drawing can be' says Dan Pyne, 'and through that to look more closely at the world around them. At its core the practice of drawing teaches you to look - to look really, really hard. How you choose to express what you have seen, well, that's the fun part!' ♦

See NSA Drawing Explored from 5 to 30 May at Tremenheere Gallery, Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens, Gulval, Penzance, TR20 8YL.

For further information go to tremenheere.co.uk or ornsanewlyn.com